



Olympic Coast



Habitats

Rocky headlands

Sandy beaches

Kelp forests

Seastacks & islands

Pelagic, open ocean

Submarine canyons

Key Species

Tufted Puffin

Bald Eagle

Northern sea otter

California gray whale

Bull kelp

Salmon

Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary spans 3,310-square miles of marine waters off the rugged Olympic Peninsula coastline.

The sanctuary extends 25 to 50 miles seaward, covering much of the continental shelf and several major submarine canyons. The sanctuary protects a productive upwelling zone—home to rich marine mammal and seabird faunas, diverse populations of kelp and intertidal algae, and thriving invertebrate communities. The sanctuary is also rich in cultural resources, with over 150 documented historical shipwrecks and the vibrant contemporary cultures of Makah, Quinault, Hoh, and Quileute Nations.

Research Activities

The sanctuary conducts an active program of physical oceanographic, geologic, marine archaeological and biological research. Its partnerships include marine research coordinated with other federal, tribal, and state agencies, as well as universities and private research organizations.

Education Activities

The sanctuary teams with the National Park Service to serve visitors with on-site interpretive programs. The sanctuary also assists the Makah, Quileute, Hoh, and Quinault tribes in developing educational programs and opportunities for nature-based tourism. The sanctuary helps local school districts develop marine science programs based on field investigations and intertidal monitoring. Interpretive signs, publications, a website, and public presentations promote sanctuary goals and awareness.



Location
From Cape Flattery to the mouth of the Copalis River, on Washington's outer coast

Protected Area
3,310-square miles

Designation
July 1994

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Above: Rugged coastline; left to right: gray whale breaching; colorful sea urchins; sea lions off Cape Flattery

